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Challenge

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PLP Summer Project Youth Unite with D.C. Transit Workers

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 6 — PLP members and friends have organized a Summer Project (SP) here in the capital of U.S. imperialism, concentrating on bringing communist politics to, and learning from, the transit workers who are immersed in a contract fight with the Metro bosses (full article next issue).

We've leafleted the entire city, politicizing and radicalizing workers. We've had long conversations with many bus and train operators, station managers, mechanics and custodial workers. We've seen first-hand the response of the bus riders; and realize that transit workers have a somewhat advantageous but shaky position in the working class, and will have to fight hard to keep what they've got. Other workers agreed that the AFL-CIO leadership has sabotaged the weapon of class war and sold us out.

In addition to working with Metro workers, we also held a series of talks and discussions on racism, police brutality, organizing for strikes, sexism and health care. This sharpened our politics and helped us grow as communists.

On the SP's first night, we discussed the city's history of racism, from Native American displacement to the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831 to the racist wage progression confronting the Metro workers' contract today, as well as racist police brutality in the D.C. area. Neighboring Prince George's County (PG) has the country's highest rate of people shot and murdered per cop (Washington Post, 7/1/01). This discussion strengthened our understanding of the specific ways racism serves the capitalists, especially here. It also helped us struggle more effectively with the community, particularly in building for the June 7 rally to fight back against police brutality in PG County.

At our second forum a founding member of PLP gave an historical (and personal) analysis of organizing strikes and unions. We evaluated the Communist Party's role in the 1961 New York Tugboat Strike, which sparked a general railroad strike. We noted the importance of strikes in uniting the working class, in building a base for PLP and in organizing towards communist revolution. These powerful discussions influenced the younger comrades in understanding the strategic importance of industrial organizing.

The next day, the Party's Cultural Committee led a wide-ranging discussion on culture, how sexism is embedded in capitalist culture and ways communists can combat it.

In the remaining days of the SP we will discuss the limits of work in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and have a full-day cadre school. Members of the community, and especially the Metro workers, have given us a warm response. We're looking forward to — and are optimistic about — the upcoming Local 689 Metro Contract Rally on June 9. We're here in solidarity with the Metro workers. The work we do as communists and as friends of PLP, be it agitation, discussion, including basebuilding will help us grow politically. D.C. has shown us that it is ripe for PL leadership. ☸



Hundreds Protest Anti-Immigrant MinuteMen

LOS ANGELES, June 6 — When James Gilchrist, founder of the Minutemen, spoke in Garden Grove, Ca. on May 25th about expanding his fascist project from Arizona to California, 300 workers and students demonstrated against this racist. Their picket line tried to prevent cars from entering the facility housing the event. While protesters continued their picketing and chanted slogans like, "Hitler rose, Hitler fell, Nazi scum go to hell!", cops in riot gear were protecting the racists and trying to intimidate the anti-racists.

Many soon realized that those protecting the Minutemen, the Garden Grove Police, were themselves fascist. Local politician and known racist Hal Netkin not only bumped the pickets with his minivan, but slammed on the gas and deliberately rammed the crowd, leaving several on the ground. The police then rushed the protesters, pushing them back and arresting several, apparently for being "too vocal." Some demonstrators responded by organizing another picket line and chanting, "The cops, the courts, the Ku Klux Klan, all are part of the bosses' plan!" The cops "held" racist Netkin and later released him without charges.

When the Minutemen event ended, the cops began to violently move demonstrators away from the exits by swinging their clubs and charging the crowd with horses. The cops formed a line across the street as the Minutemen left in their cars behind them. Then the cops charged the crowd as they extended their line. But the demonstrators refused to be intimidated and kept chanting. Finally the police charged a second time, arresting more demonstrators and beating one in jail later that night. The police exposed themselves as the fascist armed force of the state, defending racists and attacking anti-racist students and workers.

When the demonstration ended protesters went to a local police station to demand release of the prisoners. Many spent the next few days raising bail money. The arrested protesters and their supporters now must prepare to fight the serious, groundless charges brought against them by a racist, corrupt system.

One weakness emerged, expressed by some nationalist groups who refused to cooperate with white demonstrators.

This plays into the bosses' divide-and-conquer strategy. PLP members countered this with multi-racial unity and the understanding that attacks on immigrants mean attacks on all workers and students and weaken our class.

Uniting against racism is part of the fight for workers' power. Therefore, all students and workers have an interest in defeating this racism and the system that profits from it.

The Minutemen represent one way the ruling class is building fascism, to try to win workers to their patriotic, imperialist plans. The violent police offensive represents this rising fascism. Organizing anti-racist struggles against both the open and and liberal racists is crucial in combating it and building the revolutionary class consciousness needed to unite the working class to eliminate the system that thrives on racist exploitation for profit. ☸

MinuteMen: Fascist Vigilantes

The Minutemen are widely known for their racist, anti-immigrant rhetoric and their vigilante fascism. They carried out armed patrols at the Arizona-Mexican border. They target Latino immigrants and also exploit anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism spread by the rulers since 9/11. The dominant section of the ruling class doesn't want to prevent immigrant workers from entering the U.S. They need their labor, which anti-immigrant racism helps them super-exploit, and to fill the ranks of their imperialist army. So Bush denounces the Minutemen while Schwarzenegger praises them and liberal Villaraigosa calls for "inclusion" and 1,000 more cops to enforce racist exploitation. Thus, the Minutemen and the liberals represent a two-pronged attack on immigrants and all workers. ☸

editorial

U.S. Military Gearing Up for All-Out Imperialist War

Bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. rulers are seeking to add greater mobility to their war machine's unmatched killing power by realigning overseas bases. Recent maneuvers in Africa displayed the Pentagon's newly-developed "forward locations" tactics. On June 6, in "one of the largest deployments of U.S. forces in northern Africa since World War Two" (Pentagon press release, 6/3/05), more than 1,000 U.S. troops began leading live-fire "anti-terrorism" exercises in Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad. Moroccan, Nigerian and Senegalese forces also participated. Orders came from a tiny U.S. command post at Dakar, Senegal.

The operation aims both at rooting out Al Qaeda sympathizers and undermining French imperialism. Eight of the countries now hosting U.S. Special Forces are former French colonies. Most still have military pacts with Paris. The date was also meant rudely to remind French rulers of the U.S. invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944. But the main message was that U.S. rulers no longer need large bases to project deadly force.

U.S. Bosses Want Faster, More Lethal War Machine

Cold War-style overseas bases with their schools, movie theaters and softball fields don't meet U.S. imperialism's expanding need for actual warfare. The cynical purpose of those old bases was to ensure that a lot of non-combatants would die in a Soviet invasion and fuel anti-Soviet public opinion. Today, however, the Pentagon will redeploy up to 70,000 troops (and their dependents) now stationed in Germany and South Korea to the United States, while sending fresh contingents to new bare-bones facilities in Eastern Europe, the Caspian Sea basin, Southeast Asia and Africa. Bush told the Navy graduating class at Annapolis the goal of the transformation effort is to make U.S. forces "faster, lighter, more agile and more lethal."

In the near term, Congress's Overseas Basing Commission (May 2005 report) sees "threats that could emerge from an arc that stretches from West Africa across Southwest, South, and Southeast Asia, the Pacific and into the Andes...an area that contains more than its fair share of ethnic strife, religious and

ideological fanaticism, failed government and — above all — antipathy and hatred toward the West in general and the United States in particular." Thus:

"The Pentagon has already established two forward operating locations in North Africa: At Tamanrasset Airport in southern Algeria and at Camp Lemomer, a former French Foreign Legion post in Djibouti. It is also looking at possible sites for bare-bones facilities in several countries south of the Sahara, including Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda, as well as São Tome and Principe in the Gulf of Guinea.... The Pentagon is considering the establishment of bases in Australia and the eventual return of U.S. forces to their former installations in the Philippines, from which they were expelled in 1991." (Michael Klare, The Nation, 5/25/05)

In the oil-rich Persian Gulf, U.S. rulers are installing battle-ready, large-scale bases without facilities for spouses and children.

"U.S. military engineers are busy constructing fourteen 'enduring bases' for American forces in Iraq. These facilities are said to include an assortment of former Iraqi army bases; the airports at Baghdad and Mosul will also be expanded to house U.S. military aircraft. Elsewhere in the region, the Pentagon will retain its facilities in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. The large air base at Al-Udeid in Qatar is being expanded to house the U.S. personnel once stationed in Saudi Arabia." (Klare)

U.S. Moving Into Ex-Soviet Bases

In the longer term, the Overseas Basing Commission foresees a global conflict "sometime in the next quarter of a century" with "a more traditional great power competitor, possibly in our zones of interest in Europe and East Asia" — with an all-out war with China, Russia or Europe, or any combination thereof, in the cards,

"In Poland [the Pentagon] is looking into the use of several facilities once occupied by Soviet forces. In Romania much attention has been paid to the air base at Mihail Kogalniceanu and the Black Sea port of Constanta. Both were used to ferry troops and equipment to Iraq, and Secretary Rumsfeld visited these facilities in



October to weigh their future utilization by American forces. The Pentagon currently maintains forward operating locations in this region: at Khanabad in southern Uzbekistan and at Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. These bases are being used to support combat operations in Afghanistan, and the Pentagon has indicated that it plans to retain them for some time to come. In addition, the United States is refurbishing the former Soviet air base at Atyrau, on Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea coast [and is] considering the acquisition of a similar facility in Azerbaijan, which is now receiving U.S. funds for the creation of its own Caspian Sea navy." (Klare)

But the rulers acknowledge that, when push comes to shove, such on-the-cheap, lean-and-mean basing tactics may fail them. They understand that eventually they will need a full-scale military mobilization of the United States. "If [global conflict] occurs, a force posture and base structure optimized for predominantly asymmetric threats emanating from the arc of instability may not be able to stay ahead of and ultimately contend with a global rival bent on direct confrontation with the United States." (Basing Commission report)

It's our task to constantly expose the rulers' war plans and build a revolutionary communist movement to ultimately put an end to their system and its ceaseless bloodbaths. ☸

(Next: The Rulers' Military Mobilization Plans: Danger and Opportunity for the Working Class.)



as a squabble over the bosses' "declining empire." We hadn't yet begun to understand the worldwide consequences of the old communist movement's self-inflicted demise. Among the most important of these was the new international lease on life U.S. rulers could enjoy in the absence of an international communist movement — a strategically powerful mortal enemy — that could challenge world capitalism.

Nonetheless, our class analysis of Watergate was mainly correct as far as it went. During this period, the PLP provided important political leadership against the oppor-

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Lesson of Watergate:

Workers Should Never Swallow Any Bosses' Line

The Watergate scandal is once again making headlines. The bosses' media are filled with hot air about the "revelation" that W. Mark Felt, then an FBI Deputy Director, leaked the story that linked the 1972 Nixon re-election fund to the famous break-in at Democratic campaign headquarters.

Everyone knows the Watergate affair brought down Nixon's presidency. The liberal rulers presented it as a "victory for democracy" over the threat of police-state fascism. But the Progressive Labor Party called it a "billionaires' dog-fight" over the use of capitalist state power. We said the Nixon crew represented mainly the interests of "New Money" moguls from the West and Southwest, who had different tactical needs from the more entrenched "Old Money" Eastern Establishment.

For example, as the Watergate hearings were reaching their height, Business Week magazine, a shill for Old Money, lambasted Nixon editorially for overheating the economy. New Money needed rapid growth rates to amass capital quickly; Old Money needed a slow-and-steady

approach.

The Nixon gang also angered the Eastern Establishment by setting up its own internal police force to terrorize and spy on its opponents within the ruling class. The Watergate caper was just one among many of the extra-legal activities of the Nixon apparatus known as the "Plumbers." It's probably no accident that a top FBI official provided the smoking gun used to bring Nixon down.

PLP's analysis warned workers against taking sides in fights among the rulers. We said sure, Nixon's a crook surrounded by thugs, but that doesn't mean we should be fooled into backing the liberal imperialists who want to oust him. We emphasized that all the rulers were enemies of the working class, and that our side had no interest in supporting either faction. We treated Watergate as an object lesson about the nature of state power in class society.

We erred at the time in our over-optimistic estimate about U.S. imperialism's weakness, describing Watergate

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

☸PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

☸Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

☸Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

☸Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

☸Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

☸Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☸Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!



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U.S. and Mexico Bosses Profit From Exploiting Immigrants

Since the migration of Mexican workers is vital to U.S. ruling-class interests, it has traditionally encouraged that migration. In the 1880's, U.S. railroad barons and agribusiness sent recruiters to Mexico to supply cheap labor for their expanding industries. During World Wars I and II, when millions were drafted into the armed forces, the U.S. government itself began the contracting of Mexican workers to fill the labor shortage. This was especially true in the infamous 1942 "bracero" program, designed to compensate for labor scarcity created by the forced internment of the entire Japanese-American population, which had been employed mainly in agriculture.

Today, Mexican workers play perhaps an even more vital role in the U.S. bosses' economy, used by the hundreds of thousands in basic industries and services, especially manufacturing jobs crucial to the survival of these industries and their war production capacity.

"... Mexican workers play perhaps an even more vital role in the U.S. bosses' economy, used by the hundreds of thousands in basic industries and services, especially manufacturing jobs crucial to the survival of these industries and their war production capacity"

However, there's an important but seldom-mentioned aspect of this massive migration of Mexican workers to the U.S.: it's an irreplaceable escape valve for Mexico's "social pressure-cooker" that could otherwise explode in civil war. This would create great instability, not only along the more than 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexican border but also in the rest of the Americas. Worse yet, the bosses fear a Mexican working class eventually developing a mass communist party capable of leading it to state power and the building of communism. U.S. bosses remember the Mexican Revolution which, despite all its shortcomings, showed the power, courage and determination of Mexico's working class once put into motion.

The objective conditions that spawned the Mexican Revolution are unchanged. If anything, they're worse. Mexico's bosses and the U.S., European and Japanese imperialist vultures have ground the country's working class into dire poverty, while extracting an enormous amount of surplus value from its labor. Some 14 million workers in Mexico produce immense wealth — worth \$634 billion a year.

Yet, one-half of the 106-million population lives in extreme poverty. Over five million "survive" on less than a dollar a day. Meanwhile, of the 43 million in the country's workforce, over 26 million are in the "informal economy," receiving no wages nor social benefits. Another two million are unemployed. Given the militant history of Mexico's workers, this makes for a very explosive situation, especially since Mexico has one of the world's greatest unequal distributions of wealth. It boasts 11 billionaires — more than Saudi Arabia, Taiwan or Switzerland — and 85,000 millionaires

Given such conditions and the fact that PLP has not yet developed into a mass revolutionary communist party that could lead the Mexican workers to fight for state power, immigrating to the U.S. becomes an "alternative" for some workers and a blessing for U.S. and Mexican rulers in several ways. Each year over 400,000 Mexican workers make it across the border. In the last two decades, over 25% of Mexico's active work force has moved to the U.S.

This immigration not only helps diffuse the unemployment situation in Mexico but is a big boost to its economy and social stability. Mexican immigrants working in the U.S. support more than one of five families in Mexico. Last year these workers sent over \$17 billion to their dependents, a sum exceeding all the direct foreign investment Mexico received last year and more than its revenues in any other industry, except for oil.

These remittances also play an important role in stabilizing the whole U.S.-led international monetary system. Because of these remittances, the government cuts back



Last year, workers from the "bracero" program picket Mexico President Fox's ranch to demand past wages.

on subsidies to workers and uses that money to pay off about 70% of Mexico's foreign debt to U.S. bankers. Without it, Mexico's bosses would most likely default on their \$161 billion debt (181% higher than in the early 1980's when they were forced to declare a moratorium on payments). Thus, despite the U.S. bosses' public vitriolic racist ranting against undocumented Mexican workers, they greatly depend on these and other immigrant workers to help stabilize their imperialist system.

Mexico's President Fox's racist remark about Mexican workers "taking jobs even black workers won't take" is another sign that bosses on both sides of the border are using the racist divide-and-conquer strategy. The labor of both Mexican and black workers is crucial to the imperialists' super-profits. An attack on both is an attack on all workers.

As Marx wrote, capitalism creates its own grave-diggers. Our task is to organize these workers, especially at the point of production, pointing to the solution: communist revolution. ☸

IAM Hacks Rebuff Boeing Workers' Solidarity Call

WICHITA, KANSAS, June 5 — Boeing workers turned thumbs-down on the new Onex contract even though 800 workers fired the day before couldn't vote. Subsequently talks between Onex and the engineers and technical staff in SPEEA, the second largest union, broke down. Boeing and Onex will continue with the sale, imposing the rejected contracts on all workers, while firings exceeded 1,000 last weekend.

One Wichita IAM member wrote on an activist blog, "If...Onex implements the contract anyway, then [organize] a wildcat strike. What's the worst that could happen? ...The courts could seize the IAM's assets. Would that mean that there wouldn't be money available to pay the union representatives? It would almost be worth it."

More than two dozen Seattle-area Boeing workers sent an emergency letter to the IAM calling for "public demonstrations of solidarity" answering this attack as well as the default of United's pensions and the firing of 472 IAM Alaska Airline baggage handlers to be replaced by an outside contractor. Although the union

leadership didn't print the letter, they did run a front-page article entitled "Turbulent Times for American Workers," saying that: "In the past month, workers have taken center stage at United, Boeing Wichita and Alaska." They didn't propose any actions reflecting the strength of a united international working class. In fact, they did their best to separate these attacks from our up-coming contract in the Puget Sound. "It does not change our...strategy," they said. Their "strategy" has already destroyed

workers' lives and will continue to do so.

That's a far cry from our letter stating that "solidarity now [is] crucial to our contract negotiations this fall." We must pay more attention to expanding our

networks of CHALLENGE readers and sellers to carry on the fight for the hearts and minds of industrial workers. International class consciousness must become second nature to us. Then we'll understand our potential power, paving the way for working-class revolution. ☸



PLP'ers Pose Alternative to UFT Misleaders At 'Rally'

NEW YORK, June 2 — While the misleaders of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) begged Democratic Party politicians to help them get a new contract that's already two years late, a disciplined group of members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party presented a real alternative to teachers and other school workers at a union rally at Madison Square Garden today. We had a marked effect in distributing 2,000 leaflets and several hundred CHALLENGES inside and outside the hall. We paraded a banner inside reading, "Capitalism Leaves Every Child Behind! Student, Parents, Teachers, Shut The City Down!" Some comrades, including a teacher who joined PLP on May Day, leafleted inside.

The response, especially in opposing a war contract, was tremendous. Many teachers were furious at the farce inside, a combination pep rally for the leadership, and a politicians' parade.

The UFT, the AFT local representing education workers here, held the rally on the second anniversary of its failure to win a contract from the city. The UFT has 100,000 members. The Garden holds 22,000 people. So, from the very beginning it was clear that 80% of the membership could never get into the rally. And, at that, the hall was half empty.

Year after year the union leadership sells us out because the politicians, whether liberal or conservative, need to take money from the schools, hospitals, nursing homes and other vital services to fund their imperialist wars — first attacking black, Latin and Asian workers, and then the entire working class. With 80% of the student body being black and Latin, the racist rulers are very ready to deny students adequate textbooks and force them to sit on window sills in overcrowded classrooms, while multi-billionaire Mayor Bloomberg and Gov. Pataki offer the billionaire owner of the Jets \$600 million of public money to build a new football stadium.

Our leaflet called for unity with workers, whether in the public or private sector, to fight the attacks on our class, like the one on the United Airlines workers' pension. (See CHALLENGE, 6/8)

Masses Rock Bolivia's Rulers



Bolivia's masses are again rebelling against their government. In this country of 8 million, 500,000 teachers, miners, peasants, students and others held an open town hall in the center of the capital city, La Paz, totally paralyzing it. The Catholic Church was asked to mediate and President Mesa said he was resigning. But the protestors want more than just another politician to replace Mesa. Many are demanding formation of a worker-peasant government. They've continued protesting, with miners throwing sticks of dynamites while being attacked by the cops.

In the last four weeks, daily mass protests have shaken this

country. Mesa replaced President Lozada (a multi-millionaire friend of Bush) in October 2003, following another mass rebellion resulting in dozens being killed by the Army and the cops. Then in early 2004, another mass rebellion forced Mesa to cancel a deal with a French company to privatize Bolivia's water.

The cause of the current rebellion is gas and oil. In mid-May, the Bolivian Parliament approved a "Hyrocarbon Law" favoring BP, Shell, Petrobras, Enron, Total and other international energy giants. Bolivia has Latin America's second largest gas deposits. Most of the demonstrators are demanding expropriation and nationalization of the gas industry, instead of giving them to the billion-dollar corporations.

These protests have sharpened all the contradictions. There are rumors of a possible Army coup, but the generals don't trust the soldiers (many of them Aymaras, like most of the protestors). Meanwhile, the head of the Labor Federation is demanding a "progressive" military-civilian government, which would result in workers being massacred.

Evo Morales, head of the Movement Towards Socialism, central to cooling down the 2003 rebellion and bringing Mesa to power, is trying to use the protests to get himself elected President in the next elections. But many of the demonstra-

tors already see him as an opportunist sellout.

The rulers of the Santa Cruz region, containing many of the gas deposits, are forming a separatist movement to try to gain sole control of the gas bonanza. The Civic Movement for Santa Cruz, a fascist outfit, has been using goons to attack demonstrations by teachers, miners and peasants (most of them indigenous people) in the city of Santa Cruz. Its leader is Germán Antelo (a known Nazi) who has said a referendum will be held on August 12 to determine the autonomy of the region.

The masses are obviously on the move here, and desire a revolutionary change. But as long as there's no revolutionary communist leadership capable of channeling the mass struggle into a fight to eliminate all local and multi-national capitalists, the impoverished workers and peasants of Bolivia (the continent's second poorest country) will continue to be super-exploited and murdered by one bourgeois faction or another. Eventually, the different factions might even unite to impose a fascist bloodbath to crush the protests.

The call for nationalization of the gas industry and even for a worker-peasant government based on a mass "town hall" outlook was tried in the 1970's. It was brutally crushed when military dictator Banzer came to power, aided by the CIA's international counter-insurgency plot called Plan Condor. So, indeed, the alternative to fascist barbarism is to build a mass revolutionary communist movement to fight for real workers' power. ☸

LA Garment Workers Back Anti-Racist Fight Against Minutemen

LOS ANGELES — "Look, here's \$20. Next week I'll give more," said a garment worker when she heard about supporting the anti-racists arrested while protesting the racist Minutemen May 25 rally in Orange Grove. (see page 1) Others who gave donations said, "Next time we'll all go [to the protest]." Other workers, students and teachers reacted similarly.

The bosses and their lackeys like the Minutemen, "Save Our State," "VCT" and others are intensifying their attacks on immigrants as a smokescreen behind which to attack all workers. And the liberals are attacking too. An example is the Real ID (a plan for a national ID

card) which would apply to everyone, immigrants and citizens, and help the bosses tighten fascist control of all workers and youth.

Many can see more clearly that the cuts in public services, the war for oil in the Middle East, and growing racism are all part of capitalism's need to attack the working class. That's why we need to fight for communism. ☸

Capitalism 'Creates Jobs' Through Lies

According to business columnist John Crudele (NY Post, 6/7), "It is time for the employment charade to end. The Labor Department padded its May employment figure with an extraordinary 207,000 positions that probably don't exist...."

"These mystery jobs are calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS] in something called the Current Employment Statistics Net Birth/Death Model...."

"This calculation for the birth and death of companies [is] wholly speculative on the part of the Labor Department...."

"The total May growth of just 78,000 jobs means that the true number of positions available probably shrunk by about 129,000, thanks in large part to layoffs, mergers and weakening business conditions...."

"The worst part of this game is that Washington is making dangerous assumptions that disguise.... what is really going on with the economy...."

"Business conditions today are easily worse than they were in 2004. And all of the guesstimates for this year have topped 2004 levels...."

"The only conclusion can be that the real

economy — outside the government's guesstimates for companies it hopes and prays are being created — is beginning to sour."

As CHALLENGE has consistently reported, government unemployment statistics are as phony as a three dollar bill. The real jobless figures are at least double (and triple for black and Latin workers who bear the brunt of the rulers' racism) over those issued by the BLS.

The rosy picture usually drawn by the Bush administration (and never challenged by the Democrats) covers up the suffering of the millions of unemployed who remain non-existent to the bosses, in a society that cannot exist without this "army of unemployed." Only elimination of the profit system can do away with unemployment. Under communism, everyone will work and will reap the benefits for the good of our entire class.

PLP May Day Marchers:

All Mexico's Bosses Are Rotten



MEXICO CITY — PLP members brought our communist politics to the thousands of workers at the union hacks' May Day march in the Zócalo plaza here. We distributed 1,500 leaflets and 1,000 copies of DESAFIO-CHALLENGE.

Some industrial workers attended the official rally forced by the CTM (official trade union federation). Others participated in a march organized by those who call themselves "the progressives" — the National Workers' Union and other nationalist groupings.

Several days before May Day, the liberal bosses manipulated thousands of oppressed workers into supporting Mexico City's Mayor Lopez Obrador, who had lost his privileges in Mexico's Congress. This is part of the continuing fight for power among the bosses, mainly for control of the oil riches.

Powerful capitalists like Carlos Slim and Isaac Saba have invested millions backing the Mexico City government, while other capitalists led by the Mexican Bosses' Confederation hate

Lopez Obrador's policy of state capitalism.

Some workers have the dangerous illusion that Lopez Obrador's government can solve their problems. The bosses' ideological and political control over the working class won't disappear easily but only through patient, persistent daily work by communists working with their fellow workers.

The working class can't win anything by supporting any sector of the ruling class, whether it's pro-state capitalism or neoliberal. The rulers behind Lopez Obrador intend to free capitalism from the most obvious neo-liberals but they're still neo-liberals, like Brazil's Lula da Silva or Venezuela's Chavez. (See Red Eye, p. 7)

The working class and the rest of the exploited population need to destroy all forms of capitalism, fighting for and building a worker-run society. That was our message on May Day, which was well-received. ☸

PL'ers Bring Red Ideas Into CUNY Anti-War Actions

NEW YORK CITY, May 31 — Recently, a series of anti-war events shook the City University of New York (CUNY). PLP members at CUNY played a key role organizing these events and showed how to spread revolutionary ideas within reform organizations.

One activity involved an out-door campus poetry slam and anti-war speak-out attended by 40-50 people, organized by a newly-formed group of student activists. An invited poet and two anti-war veterans advocated fighting imperialism and resisting the draft. Students shared thoughts and poetry about racism, sexism, police brutality and political apathy. Some talked about overthrowing capitalism.

A militant campus rally — with anti-imperialist, anti-racist and class-conscious chants — ended up marching to a nearby military recruiting station located in a dense urban shopping center. Students and faculty picketed and chanted there while distributing PLP literature to the mostly Afro-Caribbean and Hispanic workers on their way home from work.

Until recently our campus had no organized student anti-war group. To develop students' political consciousness, a permanent organization — led mainly by students — had to be built.

CUNY students are facing massive tuition hikes and are preyed upon by military recruiters promising money for tuition. Meanwhile, faculty work without contracts under the fascist Taylor Law that bars city employees from legally striking. To link funding for impe-

rialism and the attack on working-class students and faculty, Party members active on campus emphasized and practiced a class-conscious worker-student-soldier alliance within the generally reformist "books-not-bombs" line. This produced a multi-racial core of students and some faculty, further consolidated by our organizing around the "Educators to Stop the War Conference."

We struggled to intensify student militancy, introducing communist ideas in conversations and at organizational meetings, raising the deadly role of the liberal Democrats, the emergence of fascism, and the need to smash racism and capitalism in order to end all wars. This won some to militantly fight campus military recruiters, while enraging many about the "poverty draft" that forces so many black, Latin, and white working-class youth to fight and die in the bosses' profit wars "in exchange for" college tuition. This struggle led to the anti-war poetry slam and speak-out, the militant campus rally and the march to an off-campus recruitment station.

Maintaining a strong worker-student alliance, we convinced the group to ally with the anti-war wing of the local faculty union, who enthusiastically supported the students and provided signs for the event that read "Money for Education Not for War." With full student participation, we prepared militant, class-conscious chants for the rally, emphasizing international workers' and soldiers' unity, and the need to fight back, including: "Workers of the World are Under Attack; Cops out of the Hood, Troops out of Iraq!" and "Sol-



diers, Sailors, and Marines, Resist the Imperialist War Machine!"

At the poetry slam, students welcomed the anti-war poet and soldier speakers. Many spoke at the open mic and eagerly joined the prepared chants during the campus rally. This militant spirit sparked student demands to march on the recruiter station, displaying a fiery worker-student-soldier solidarity as teachers and students picketed and chanted, encouraging soldiers to rebel.

Now, student morale is very high. The group promises to grow substantially over the next semester. Evidence of our success can be found in the group's recently-published mission statement, which expresses the need to fight racism, sexism, exploitation and imperi-

alism and to build principled alliances with other student groups, faculty and soldiers.

With some students already reading CHALLENGE and attending study groups, we hope that the latter as well as PLP's summer activities will have shown the clear difference between reform and revolutionary political work. This will help all of us become more committed revolutionary communist leaders and will prepare us for another semester of fighting imperialist war recruiters and campus fascism. ☺

Red Army Offensive Saved U.S.-U.K.



A Red Army soldier with captured Nazis.

(Part III, series on 60th anniversary of end of World War 2.)

The "No" vote in France and the Netherlands on the European Union Constitution is impelling the big European bosses to look for "Plan B" to create a powerful European imperialist bloc — led by Germany and France — to compete with their U.S. imperialist rivals. The last time Europe was "united" was under German imperialism's Third Reich.

The Nazi army brought the continent under its control, its blitzkrieg easily defeating the armies of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, etc. Britain's forces were driven into the sea at Dunkirk.

On June 22, 1941, when the Nazis' Operation Barbarossa sent a four-million-strong army — with all of Europe's industries and manpower at their disposal — to "crush Bolshevik Russia," Western pundits predicted it would be like "a hot knife cutting through butter."

Initially the Nazis did advance, destroying everything in their path. Then, in August 1942 Winston Churchill went to Moscow alarmed over the German offensive against Stalingrad. This could have led to Nazi control of the oil in the Caucasus, but Churchill still said the U.S.-UK forces were not ready to open a second front in the West. Stalin accused the Western Allies of not wanting to fight and lose lives — the Red Army was losing over 6,000 soldiers a day. But he realized the Red Army couldn't wait for the Second

Front and had to carry on the bulk of the fight. (<http://www.redvoltaire.net/article5558.html>).

Stalin told Churchill, "We'll stop them in the mountains." Few believed him. On Nov. 7, 1942, celebrating the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution inside a Moscow Metro station since the Nazi airforce controlled the skies, Stalin said, "Soon we'll be celebrating in the streets." Eleven days later came the incredible news: the Soviets had launched a massive offensive that was to completely surround the Nazi army in Stalingrad later that month. Hitler retreated from plans to capture the Caucasus' oil fields and sent help to his forces in Stalingrad, but it was too late. In February 1943, Marshall Von Paulus surrendered the entire Nazi 6th army. It was the turning point of World War II.

Meanwhile, Churchill and Roosevelt did everything possible to delay opening a second front in Western Europe, which could speed the collapse of the Nazi regime. Many said they wanted to see the Soviets and the Nazis bleed each other to death and then come in for the kill. But when it was obvious the Red Army would defeat the Nazis single-handedly, Operation Neptune-Overlord — "D-Day" — began on June 6, 1944 in Normandy, France. While the U.S. and Britain faced a much weaker Nazi military in Western Europe, because the bulk of Hitler's forces were fighting — and losing — in the East, the invading U.S.-UK forces were almost defeated twice by the Nazis. First they encountered such heavy resistance when trying to take Cannes, Churchill had to ask for Stalin's help, to intensify the offensive in Eastern Europe. Then in the Ardennes area — "The Battle of the Bulge" — U.S. forces were surrounded by the Nazi's Panzers (tanks). It turned out that the Red Army helped the Western Allies more than the Second Front helped the Soviets.

Despite all the lies and slanders against the Red Army, the course of World War II would have been far different without the Soviet Union and its leadership. ☺

Watergate: All The Presidents' Lies

continued from page 2

tunist error of supporting "lesser-evil" bosses.

We continue this role today. It's no accident that Watergate is back in the news during the Bush II presidency. If anything, the stakes are even higher now than in 1972-74. As CHALLENGE has frequently pointed out, the rulers have embarked on a long-term adventure of mobilizing society to preserve and extend U.S. imperialism's world domination. This means preparation for ever-widening wars abroad and a ruthless police state at home.

The rulers made this strategy clear under Clinton, releasing the "bi-partisan" Hart-Rudman Report on National Security in the 21st Century. Then 9/11 gave Bush a green light to invade Afghanistan and establish a fascist Department of Homeland Security, under the guise of fighting "terrorism." But the liberals are disgusted by the Bushite's incompetence.

Bush was supposed to marshal a wave of enthusiasm for war in the Persian Gulf and surrounding areas. So far he's failed miserably. After some initial flag-waving over Afghanistan, military recruitment for the "all-volunteer" economic draft is sinking. Bush was supposed to secure Iraq for Exxon Mobil, et al. He ignored military specialists who said he needed twice as many troops as he sent into Iraq. Now the U.S. military is facing a quagmire, with mounting casualties and no end in sight to an

increasingly unpopular adventure.

Bush was supposed to impose a self-discipline within the bosses' ranks in order to unite the ruling class around imperialism's long-term needs. Instead, he has continued to pander to the narrow economic interests of those capitalists who helped him get elected. Rather than finance the police state and the war machine, his tax cuts are swelling the private coffers of his cronies. Skirmishes currently raging in Congress over his presidential appointments reflect this unease within the big bosses' ranks.

Once again, we must never allow ourselves to fall into the "lesser-evil" trap. Nixon was our enemy, and so were the Democrats who overthrew him. Bush is our enemy, and so are the Democrats and liberal Republicans, who want a more ruthlessly efficient war machine and a more centralized, popularly-supported class dictatorship at home. By reviving Watergate, the liberals are sending Bush a warning: shape up or we'll ship you out. The stakes for the rulers are high enough for this internal spat to possibly become violent.

Our job, as always, is to use a communist analysis of events as a weapon to better wage the class struggle against all of them.

(For more information about the Watergate scandal see PLP pamphlet <http://www.plp.org/pamphlets/Watergate.pdf>



Send comments to :Challenge Periodicals, PO 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202 or email: cd188@juno.com

Rock & Roll Against Minutemen

While checking out some stuff from the company tool room, I mentioned that the Minutemen had been spreading hate down in Orange County a couple of nights before. Several hundred people demonstrated against these racists. “Yeah,” said a worker named Salvador. “I read about it in the paper. They’re scum.”

I told him I’d heard the Minutemen and another anti-immigrant group were planning a “patriotic” rally on June 25 in Baldwin Park. “They were already there three weeks ago, I noted. “They’re trying to go on a roll.”

“Hey! I got people in that town going back to my grandfather,” said Salvador. “The old man laid half the streets in that town.”

“Well, we’re going to be out there against them again,” I said. “The governor loves them because they blame Latino immigrants instead of the bosses for bankrupting California: the old divide-and-conquer, you know.”

“Tell me what the plan is and I’ll get half the guys in this shop to go out there with me,” Salvador said as we walked back to his station.

I’m taking his anti-racist sentiments seriously. He’s friends with a lot of our co-workers. The next day I gave him a CHALLENGE with the article about the protest against these creeps. At our informal weekly shop meeting, I announced that next week Salvador would talk to us about Baldwin Park and the 25th of June. I think we might be getting a little anti-racist rock and roll ourselves.

SoCAL RED

Robeson, Communists Inspired Belafonte

Recently Harry Belafonte spoke about his social activism at Howard University in Washington, D.C. while here to accept the Paul Robeson “Here I Stand” award from Paul Robeson, Jr. I went to the event with a good friend, her daughter, and her daughter’s friend. Only a few hundred people attended this explicitly political event. Outside, a worker from SEIU Local 82 leafleted about their fight for a living wage on campus.

Belafonte was inspiring. It was refreshing to hear him talk openly and lovingly of his friendship with African Americans Paul Robeson and Ben Davis, members of the Communist Party, USA. Belafonte noted his working-class background. His mother first raised her children’s political consciousness through exposure to Marcus Garvey, a black nationalist who spoke on Harlem street corners. Belafonte then touched on his learning disabilities, his dropping out of school and his stint in the military.

While working as a janitor’s assistant, he received a tip in the form of tickets to the Negro Theatre in NYC. This changed his life. There he met Paul Robeson and communist activists who were supporting arts initiatives by African Americans. With Robeson as his mentor, Belafonte participated in many of the same anti-racist, international struggles as Robeson.

The speech, with its pro-communist aspects, sparked a vigorous discussion next week at lunch. My friend M. from work said Martin Luther King, Jr. originally had communists in his circle of advisors, but kicked them out because he feared black workers

PLP S Songs On One



The 1970’s PLP LP’s “Power to the Workers” and “A World to Win” are now available on one CD. It includes songs by the PLP Singers — in English and Spanish — such as: “Unemployment Blues”; “Challenge, the Communist Paper”; “Bella Ciao”; “Señor Inversionista”; “Every Time I see a Cop, I think of Clifford Glover”; “The Song of the Deportees”; “The Internationale” and many more. Rekindle old memories and live new ones.

Send \$10 payable to Challenge Periodicals, and mail to PLP, Box 808, GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202

wouldn’t join the civil rights movement alongside communists. I explained how communists had always been involved in the civil rights struggle, as part of their commitment to smashing racism. Fannie Lou Hamer and Rosa Parks had taken courses at a communist-led organizing school in Tennessee.

M. then said blacks in Alabama didn’t like communism, but I told her that black sharecroppers and steelworkers in Alabama had been very supportive of the Communist Party (see “Hammer and Hoe,” by Robin Kelley). I also explained how the International Labor Defense (ILD) and the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) — both organized by the Communist Party — preceded King’s civil rights movement and organized a mass movement to help free the framed Scottsboro boys, taking the struggle outside narrow legal channels. It was far more effective in that effort than the NAACP. The ILD and CRC had vastly different political outlooks than the NAACP. M. agreed,

saying no one listens to the NAACP anymore because it just sucks up to politicians and tries to get ahead within the capitalist system — quite a contrast with the ILD and CRC outlook, that workers could be won to direct action, multi-racial unity and militancy!

M. is still unsure of her old Alabama friends’ openness to communism, but now has a lot more to think about, knowing a bit more history — and future possibilities with the PLP — inspired by Belafonte’s impressive talk.

D.C. COMRADE

CHALLENGE comments: The old Communist Party did play a major role in fighting racism, for multi-racial unity and equality for black workers in the U.S. The Scottsboro Boys struggle was just one of many they led. But it should also be noted that because the CP abandoned the fight for communist revolution, and in fact even dissolved itself in 1944, the party was wiped out in the South, espe-

French Bosses Scheme After the *Non*-Vote

It’s necessary to separate the reasons why the French people voted against the proposed European Union Constitution from the way the bosses intend to use this “no” vote. The main section of the French bosses wanted a “yes” vote but they were unable to control the “no” vote. The “parties of government” — the “respectable” bourgeois parties, the UMP and the Socialist Party — advocated a “yes” vote.

Their media campaign was somewhat similar to the U.S. build-up for the war on Iraq (as outlined in “Fahrenheit 9/11”). The “no” vote was a temporary setback for the bosses. Unable to control the vote, they’re trying to control the consequences.

Everyone is trying to put their own spin on “what the vote means.” In this case, it’s possible for the French bosses to use the “no” vote as an argument for all kinds of things [such as strengthening a German/French-led European bloc to oppose the U.S. and other imperialist rivals]. Similarly, they’re using the “no” vote to say “people want radical change” and then they pursue radical right-wing change.

President Jacques Chirac emerged from the “yes” campaign way down in public opinion

cially among black workers. Even though it reconstituted itself, it advocated the “peaceful road to Socialism,” and supported the liberal Democrats as the way to “push the country to the left,” rather than taking direct action against the entire ruling class to smash racism and other capitalist evils.

Religion Helps Mask Immorality

A CHALLENGE article (6/8) on “Politics, Morality and Murder” correctly pointed out that morality does not come from religion, but rather from politics. My own experience bears that out.

A co-worker (in a health care field) asked me if I believed in god. When I said I didn’t, she asked, “Then what is the source of your spiritual health and morality?” I replied, “My relationships with people.” She shook her head and shrugged, as if to say I was doomed.

Turns out that, with all her “spiritual health and morality,” she was constantly knifing me in the back. We were supposed to be sharing the work equally, but others told me I was doing three times what she did. Whenever she had a complaint about me, she would tell our supervisor, saying nothing to me. In contrast, whenever I had a complaint about her, I spoke to her directly.

When I ran for department chief to help run it better for the benefit of the patients and doctors, rather than telling me whether or not she’d vote for me, she convinced another worker favoring me to vote against me. Later she was appointed service chief. After a few years she instigated my firing.

Her idea of “morality and spiritual health” is my idea of immorality and spiritual infirmity. Religion helps to mask immorality and make it more acceptable. When politicians flaunt it, like George W. Bushit, run for cover.

CACTUS RED

Multiculturism: Help or Hinder Anti-Racist Unity?

During a recent visit to Los Angeles, racial fights erupted at high schools in South LA and Santa Monica. One National Public Radio station program called “Which Way LA?” featured an African American spokesperson from Community Access, and a Latino from “Surf’s Up.” Interestingly, both agreed multiculturalism bred “racial pride.” Emphasizing differences over common characteristics among students of different “races” and nationalities caused the student fights.

For many years, PLP and the International Committee Against Racism demonstrated that multiculturalism was divisive, emphasizing cultural differences. The class concept of multiracial unity concentrates on the similarities between groups, bringing them together despite the bosses’ efforts to divide us by “race.” Dialectically, we believe workers are more alike than different. This should be reflected in everything we do.

When my children and those of my friend were in middle school, we helped students, teachers and parents organize an International Dinner. Working together, students in World History or Social Studies made maps of the countries. Food tables were set up by continent. We encouraged student participation in all the different songs and dances represented there: rap, native dances from Latin America, Africa or Asia. We had a map in the

Continued on page 7



lobby where people put pins showing which country they or their ancestors came from. Many students and their families participated. It was the best program all year, and emphasized the commonality of working-class people while appreciating minor differences in food and culture.

In the recent racial fights in LA and Santa Monica schools, the system's response was to add more security. But several parents of different cultures told the news media that teaching our children not to be racist was the priority, not heavier security. Acting on that consciousness could move us towards firmer class unity.

D.C. RED

Truth Emerging About U.S. Torture

When a usually reliable senior Pentagon official and former detainees say some hoodlum in uniform flushed the Koran down a toilet to “rattle” Muslim prisoners in Guantanamo Bay prison, why shouldn't we believe it? No report in the bosses' media has taken the pris-

oners who experienced these abuses seriously. Similar reports of a Koran being desecrated are a year old yet nobody took notice until demonstrators in Afghanistan took to the streets.

From a working-class perspective, the prisoners are far more credible witnesses than any Pentagon official. They were snatched from their homelands and forced to endure psychological and physical torture. Even Pentagon officials are admitting abuse at Guantanamo, but Amnesty International made it clear this has been occurring all along.

Does anyone (communist or not) reading this have a hard time believing that the holier-than-thou USA would treat prisoners this way? Just last year we learned of terrible tortures at the Abu Ghraib prison. Who are they trying to fool? These capitalists have slaughtered more than 100,000 Iraqis in this dirty war! The bosses' own “respected medical journals” have acknowledged this.

The written word has shown its power and the whole world's workers have seen what happens when truth emerges. The fact that a small report in a magazine could cause spon-

taneous riots across the globe is astounding. Those exploited masses in Afghanistan are mad as hell and are protesting conditions being imposed on them by a bunch of racist gangsters as well as standing in solidarity against anti-Arab bigotry at Guantanamo Bay. The truth, like the working class, has no borders.

RED TRUTH TELLER

New Column is Inspiring

I really like your new column “Life Under Communism.” When we have concrete examples, it's really helpful and inspiring. Keep up the good work.

BAY AREA READER

Our Vision of the Future

Workers need a vision of the future! Almost every Sunday morning I bring CHALLENGE and PLP's vision to my friends in San Francisco. After pizza and coffee with this one family, we attend his church where more discussions ensue with his “brothers and sisters.”

WEST COAST COMRADE

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS
Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

Muslim innocents suffer from US tactics

....The voice of dissent among Muslims [has] grown more audible — as a result of a series of criminal cases that have raised questions about the methods used by authorities in their fight against terrorism.

The government focus on undercover sting operations and the recruitment of a network of Muslim informants has provoked sharp criticism....

But, of late, perhaps no case has caused more ire than that of two teenage Muslim girls who were detained on immigration violations in March after the F.B.I. became concerned that they might be planning to become suicide bombers. After six weeks in detention the girls were quietly released and officials have declined to comment on the case....

“It's nerve-wracking that every time you hear there was a sting operation you start praying it won't be an Arab...” (NYT, 6/4)

Iraq stress hits 12,000 GI's; 90 suicides

Some military experts say they believed the surreptitious threat from suicide bombers and snipers in Iraq is even more stressful than open combat. Through the end of April, 1,118 Army men and women had been evacuated from Iraq for psychiatric reasons, according to official statistics.

Through February, according to the Department of Veteran Affairs, 12,020 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan had been treated for post-traumatic stress disorder. (NYT, 6/3)

Drug co. profiteers cover up health risks

When the drug industry came under fire last summer for failing to disclose poor results from studies of antidepressants, major drug makers promised to provide more information about their research on new medicines. But nearly a year later, crucial facts about many clinical trials remain hidden, scientists independent of the company say,

Within the drug industry, companies are sharply divided.... But...Merck and Pfizer release less information and reluctant to add more, citing competitive pressures.

As a result, doctors and patients lack critical information about important drugs, academic researchers say, and the companies can hide negative trial results by refusing to publish studies, or by cherry-picking and highlighting the most

favorable data from studies they co publish....

...Giaco had hidden results from trials showing that its antidepressant Paxil might increase suicidal thought in children and teenagers....

Merck and Pfizer have been criticized for failing to disclose...clinical trial results that indicated that cox-2 pain-killers like Vioxx might be dangerous to the heart. (NYT, 5/21)

Chavez's job: stall off real revolution

Chavez offers a cultural as well as a political alternative to the prevailing US-inspired model that dominates Latin America.

So, what does his Bolivarian revolution consist of? He is friendly with Castro yet he is no out-of-fashion state socialist. Capitalism is alive and well in Venezuela — and secure. Chavez seeks to cure the excesses of what he terms “savage neoliberalism....”

...If it fails, the people will...demand something different. And...more radical. (GW, 6/9)

Rich liberals keep blood-sucking system going

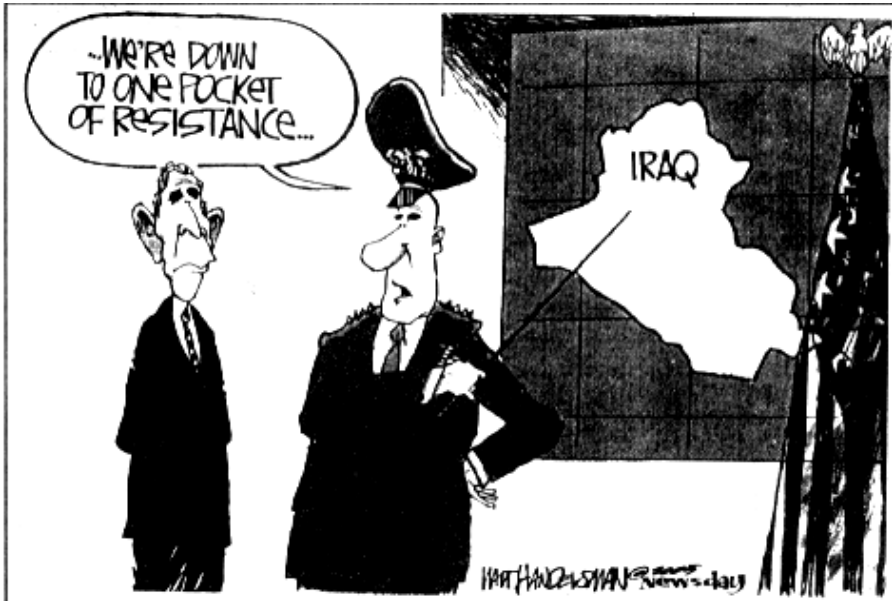
The median family income of a Harvard student is \$150,000....

The educated class reaps the benefits of the modern economy — seizing most of the income gains of the past decades — and then ruthlessly exploiting its position to ensure the continued dominance of its class....

The denizens profess their solidarity with the oppressed....They objectively serve the right [anti-left].... (NYT, 5/29)

'Pro-life' US doesn't fight genocide

“A Problem from Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide,” Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize-winning history....reveals



that throughout the 20th century, whenever genocide occurred, whether the victims were Armenians, Jews, Cambodians, Kurds or Tutsis, the American government stood by and did nothing. Worse, in some instances, it sided with the murderers.... (NYT, 6/5)

Capitalist China: Warm ties with butchers

Less than two weeks after Uzbek troops slaughtered hundreds of civilians in a bloody crackdown on political protests, the country's president, Islam Karimov, was welcomed in Beijing with the red carpet treatment and a 21-gun salute....

China...boasted its willingness to step up imports of oil, gas and other minerals, support Uzbekistan's bid to join the World Trade Organization and cooperate more closely in the fight against terrorism....

International condemnation of Sudan, Iran and Zimbabwe has produced a similar outcome....Beijing is now Sudan's biggest trading partner....

In Zimbabwe the same....increased trade.... Iran is a similar story....

Beijing is not the head of an ideological bloc. Quite the opposite. China will deal with anyone, anywhere, no questions asked. (GW, 6/9)

Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith

'Dark Side' or Red Side?

"Star Wars, Revenge Of The Sith", while telling the story of Anakin Skywalker's fall and the subsequent birth of Darth Vader, is the most overtly political of all the Star Wars movies. The concept of the fall of light into darkness is as old as writing. The fall of the Biblical Lucifer, the most beautiful of all the angels, into Satan, the lord of evil, and of Macbeth, the hero, into Macbeth the evil usurper and murderer, are two examples of this concept.

Communists understand that nothing is spontaneous. The seeds of destruction, the dark side, were already in these "heroes" before they "fell" into evil. Greed, selfishness, and the lust for unbridled power were the seeds that grew into the virus that ate the very soul of Anakin Skywalker. He wanted to be the best, most powerful Jedi knight.

At first, the Jedi support the Democratic government, but then realize the Democracy has been usurped by a Sith Lord. The Sith represent the "Dark Side" of the force. The Sith are those who embrace the path of power and destruction in the hopes of being the supreme ruler in the galaxy, and the Jedi order has been their bitter enemy for thousands of years.

The Jedi order has chosen sides in a war in which both sides are manipulated by a Sith Lord. (How many times has the communist movement chosen sides with a lesser-evil boss in a war, only to be betrayed by the bourgeoisie when it no longer needs our help?)

Before the Sith betray and massacre the Jedi, they realize they must take direct control of the Senate. They conclude that you cannot passively guide society to a better social development (as many phony leftists and liberals think), but that the best solution is to revolt for direct acquisition of the state



and means of production. If the Jedi order had taken direct control of the Senate and started steering the galaxy towards a selfless society based on Jedi principles, how long would it have been before the liberal separatists, and future Rebel Alliance, attacked and murdered them?

Jedi idealism was rooted in the belief that they could steer and guide society from their holy temple. The Jedi's absolute belief in their own indestructibility led to their own grave. They didn't actively seek to transform all of society, but only sought out the special few who were deserving of the Jedi training. This concept, that only a few "select special people" can ever hope to control society, is also a rotten form of bourgeois idealism that leads to selfishness and an eventual betrayal of a revolutionary movement.

The Jedi also say that fear, anger and attachment lead to the Dark Side. Communists know that unfocused anger, attachment to greed, selfishness and fear are ruling-class tools. Revolutionary anger and a selfless desire to serve the working class are necessary for a Communist to actively drive society to Communist Revolution. The Jedi never actively serve anybody but

the ruling class. They support the liberal democratic rulers ("I am for the Republic and democracy" as Obi-Wan told Anakin as they fought each other) and act as police to protect what they perceive as "order," but this order in the galaxy is based on crime lords and slavery (Anakin was actually once a slave, and his mother was sold into marriage on the planet Tatooine).

All that Anakin lived for was turning to ash when he believed that he couldn't control everything around him, like the death of his mother or the death of his wife Padme. As he embraced the greed and selfishness inside of him, quantity moved to quality within him. The positive was negated, and he became evil. He rationalized his betrayals, his murders and his fall. Anakin's cries of anguish and loss were music to The Emperor's ears. The bosses absolutely love to buy the souls of revolutionaries, so we must guard against the "dark side," capitalist selfish ideology, the bosses' most dangerous weapon. ☹

The Welfare Poets Sing Songs of Workers' Struggles



It's difficult to find pro-working class music. But The Welfare Poets, a New York-based band, has 15 years experience making proletarian music. In solidarity with working people's struggles, one member performed at our May Day. One of the group's sharpest lyrics from their song "Resistance" says:

Stop wasting your energies on sectarian schisms/ we have the same enemy, it's capitalism/ a system which exploits workers work, wealth, worth

The song is from their latest album "Rhymes for Treason" which they premiered at an album release party in lower Manhattan, featuring performances by Immortal Technique and Dead Prez. One of The Welfare Poets called it the best anti-

capitalist event on Wall Street in a long time.

Their songs are a mix of hip hop influenced by jazz and blues, bomba, plena, guanguanco, and Cuban cha, cha, cha. The lead vocals are mainly poetry but others include reggae and jazz styles. All their music is original and many songs will have you dancing and singing along. Their music is multilingual with lyrics in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole.

Politically the group's songs feature workers' struggles throughout the Caribbean, U.S., Iraq, and around the world. One song attacks the media's role in serving the bosses and winning workers to the bosses' ideas, called, "Rhymes for Reason," it criticizes apolitical hip hop and calls on emcees to speak the truth and educate instead of just performing fantasies, lulling audiences and "entertaining." "Sak Pasé (What's up/Burning)," led by a wailing trumpet solo, tells about the CIA's role in ousting Haitian president Aristide. Other songs rhyme against police brutality and U.S. presence in Puerto Rico and Vieques.

An idea framing many songs in the album is that workers are largely won to the bosses' ideas and capitalists are momentarily powerful. The track "Original Hip Hop" answers the situation this way:

Have intensive sessions where we're pensive/ cover extensive lessons/ come to

the conclusion that even with their expensive weapons/ the only solution to improve our situation is revolution

While The Welfare Poets are decidedly on the workers' side, they still cling to some capitalist ideas. At their album release party, in a nationalist vein not based on a class analysis, they cried "Vive Cuba!" and called "Free Puerto Rico, Free Vieques, Free Haiti." Most of their songs promote some form of "resistance" but they're removed from an actual revolutionary movement to organize workers to overthrow capitalism and establish workers' power. Some songs imply that reforms lead to revolution. In these ways the politics are not aligned with PLP's but their music is great to listen to and to spark conversations. One weakness that the Welfare poets exhibit is not enough emphasis on fighting sexism. The issue is barely mentioned on any of the tracks. This is an issue that PLP struggles with, based on a class analysis of its roots in capitalism.

Like many of us in and around PLP, the band is fighting to sharpen its politics and despite their weaknesses, their music still tries to produce working-class culture. We can learn a lot from them in our efforts to produce culture based on revolutionary communism.

**Information on
The Welfare Poets can be found at
www.welfarepoets.com**

UNDER COMMUNISM...

How Would Schooling Be Better?

(This column continues a new CHALLENGE series on how life under communism would differ from life under capitalism; how it will represent the interests of the international working class and our allies. We invite all readers to contribute both questions and answers to this column for discussion, relying on either history, examples from our own lives, or hope and imagination.)

In capitalist schools the everyday lack of respect of teachers and administrators for students is so pervasive that even parents can fail to recognize it. I once accompanied a friend R. — a PLP member — to pick up his son at junior high after school. When R. asked a teacher at the school entrance for the location of a certain room, the teacher was curt and treated R. as though he were trespassing without a hall pass.

On the way out, the teacher spoke to R.'s son in accusatory tones, even in the presence of his father. R. said nothing. I later commented on the teacher's rudeness, and said he had no business talking that way to either a student or a parent. R. said he didn't think the teacher had been that rude. This type of disrespect by school personnel is so much a part of our environment that even a communist failed to notice it.

Rudeness is not as great an assault as the racism that especially affects the black, Latin and Asian students, cops in the schools, metal detectors, regarding all kids as guilty of something, falling ceilings, non-functional toilets, bad food, lack of heat or air conditioning, etc. However, this horrible disrespect is both a result and a cause of the more oppressive and dangerous aspects.

Why are schools this way, and how can the education of children be organized under communism to change this situation? The working class will have to forge many aspects of this in practice, after the capitalists have been forcibly thrown from power. For example, will classes even be organized with a number of students and one teacher who lectures? Will children spend 7 to 8 hours, 5 days a week, inside one building? These details remain to be worked out over time, using a significant amount of experimentation with a variety of forms of organization. But there are some basic things we can figure out now.

The purpose of education under communism will not have to deal with a small class of rich and powerful racist exploiters using students as future sources of profits (which is also the basis for racism). Rather, the purpose will be to enrich the lives of each individual student so that they, in turn, can enrich the lives of everyone around them — the entire working class. When students are not merely a means to someone else's end (profit-makers), but part of the end itself, then respect for them will follow. And as any teacher knows who already respects her or his students, respect by students for such teachers also follows. Many (hopefully all) teachers who are PLP members and others already show that kind of respect for their students and the parents of students. They are often, if not always, regarded as among the best teachers in the school.

Teachers and students can then be friends, sharing a common goal. No rudeness from a teacher to a student will be tolerated. Without fear of punishment, students will feel free to criticize a teacher who's rude to a fellow student (perhaps because of a stressful day). The teachers will be there to serve the needs of the students, and the needs of the working class as a whole through the students. We'll worry later about class sizes and hours. ☹